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POLYVACCINE PRODUCED BY NEW METHOD

V. Kol'tsov

Polyvaccine is an essentially new Soviet preparation, suggested and developed by the Soviet scientists Aleksandrov and Gefen, and designed for immunization against intestinal and certain other diseases. The Moscow Institute imeni Mechnikov was the first to begin the production of polyvaccine. The method of the English scientists, Topla and Raystrik, was used to obtain complete antigens. Based on conservative principles and the use of a solid agar medium, this method was nonetheless considered an important new development. Since then, however, Soviet microbiology has made rapid strides and this method proved inappropriate for the production of a high-quality polyvaccine. Two years ago, a new method for mass production of a liquid bacteriophage was devised in the Institute imeni Mechnikov. This method, originated by Soviet microbiologists -- N. Ye. Lebedev, Candidate of Medical Sciences, and others -- was acknowledged to be the most productive and promising of all existing methods. It guaranteed a continuous technological process, high production quality, and low production costs.

The Central Scientific Control Institute imeni Tarasevich tested the growth of cultures by this new method successfully, thus solving the problem of obtaining high-quality complete antigens for polyvaccine. The Ministries of Public Health of the USSR and the RSFSR rewarded the originators of this new production method and recommended that it be introduced in a number of institutes. The method justified itself and received wide acclaim in institutes in Leningrad, Gor'kiy, Rostov-on-Don, Ufa, Tomsk, and other cities.

In January 1949, Ye. I. Smirnov, Minister of Public Health USSR, issued an order which obliged the director of the Institute imeni Mechnikov to continue research on this new method of polyvaccine production.

In April 1948, the Institute imeni Mechnikov had taken a courageous step and adopted this new technology for producing polyvaccine. Old equipment was removed, new equipment was installed, and the Institute began to

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produce antigens on a fundamentally new principle. The first production tests proved completely successful. A little more work indicated that the conversion would be successfully concluded. However, the management of the Institute, Director L. G. Veber and his assistant, I. A. Poyarkov, failed to give the scientific workers ample time to complete the tests on a high-quality preparation. Arguments concerning the necessity of a production risk and the need for further tests left the management unmoved. They became frightened by the technical difficulties that were cropping up.

The Institute continued its half-way measures. Less than a month later, the management ordered the equipment dismantled. The old equipment, which had been stored in the warehouse, was re-installed. The production laboratory returned to the outmoded foreign method. The Institute hastened to compensate for production lost. Now, the management reports that the plan has been exceeded and they are counting up their rightful bonus. On the surface, everything seems fine, but only on the surface, because the conservative and outmoded foreign method defends and employed by Veber and Poyarkov cannot possibly secure the production of a high-quality polyvaccine. The Institute produces a poor preparation, its effectiveness is far from that required, and vaccinations are often accompanied by severe reaction.

Strange as it seems, the conservative position of the management is silently supported by the Department of the Institutes of Epidemiology and Microbiology of the Ministry of Public Health REFER (director, F. A. Vershileva). In any case, the department seems to be in full agreement with the assertion of Veber and Poyarkov that conversion to the new method may prevent fulfillment of the production plan.

Several months after Smirnev's order, in the Institute where this remarkable method was originated, the management has not only failed to make progress in introducing the new method of polyvaccine production, but has also taken all possible measures to retain the outmoded method.

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